



Making Involvement Matter in Essex

**Impact of Changes to
Day Services Commissioned by
Essex County Council
in North Essex,
Wickford, Rochford &
Castlepoint**

Web Survey Report

**With thanks to members of the North Essex Research
Network for their help with developing the web survey and to
all those who responded to it**

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The questionnaire and survey

The questionnaire was developed to include a broad range of service users in line with the requirements of the evaluation specification:

- People using the current day services
- Those who had used the previous services but did not use the current services
- Those who had used the current services but no longer did so
- People who had not used day services in recent years
- Carers of people in these groups.

The questions were developed initially from the day service specification documents and the length of the questionnaire was aimed at enabling useful information to be collected whilst not creating a questionnaire that was too long or unwieldy to complete. The first question acted as a filter and utilised 'skip logic' to direct informants to the appropriate set of questions, depending on their pattern of service use.

The questionnaire was created on 'survey monkey' and was discussed and piloted with members of the North Essex Research Network at a group session lasting two hours. Following amendments resulting from the piloting, the questionnaire link was e-mailed to all participants who attended the meeting and further amendments were made. The link to the questionnaire was then e-mailed to all those on the MIME database, publicised in the November newsletter and embedded on the MIME website.

Questions were tailored for each group and included as appropriate:

- Ratings of overall satisfaction with services, how well they met a range of needs and their approach to working with service users
- Ratings of how well the change process had been managed, overall and in relation to specific aspects of the process
- Reasons for not or no longer using day services.

Respondents were asked to indicate where they lived and where relevant to provide information about the specific services they were using or had used in the past. Space was left after each question and at the end of the questionnaire for free text comments.

Response to the survey

A total of 33 completed questionnaires were received by the cut off date of 16th November 2011:

- Seventeen were from current users of day services
- Three people used day services prior to 2009, but not since
- Two had used current services, but had stopped using them

- Eight had not used day services
- Three were carers.

The results for each group are presented in turn in the following section.

Results

Current users of day services

Respondents who indicated where they were based (16) were spread across North Essex, with one from a South Essex locality. Four were based in Harlow and two each in Chelmsford, Colchester and Clacton, with the remaining areas each attracting one response. Where numbers in the tables that follow do not add up to 17 this is because not everyone answered all the questions.

Respondents' overall satisfaction with day services was as shown in table 1 on the next page. As the table illustrates, the great majority of respondents (80%) were satisfied with their day services, although three (20%) were dissatisfied (from three different areas).

The mean scores in relation to meeting their needs in particular domains are shown in table 2. Respondents were asked to rate their satisfaction with the help provided in relation to each domain using a 3-point scale (1=It has been a great help, 2 = It has been a little help, 3 = It has not helped). The lower score is therefore more positive, so 'participating in local community groups and activities' was the area where day services were rated as helping the most and 'housing' was the area where they helped the least. One person commented 'brilliant' in the box that was provided for comments.

Table 1
Overall, how satisfied are you with the day
services you use?

Missing			
Valid	Very Dissatisfied	1	6.7
	Dissatisfied	2	13.3
	Satisfied	5	33.3
	Very satisfied	7	46.7
	Total	15	100.0
		Frequency	Valid Percent

Table 2
Mean scores: satisfaction with help in need domains

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean
Participating in local community groups and activities.	13	1.00	3.00	1.2308
Self help group membership and support.	11	1.00	3.00	1.3636
Volunteer work.	11	1.00	2.00	1.4545
Developing a circle of friends and social contacts.	12	1.00	3.00	1.5000
Social and leisure activities.	11	1.00	3.00	1.6364
Participating in Art and Cultural activities.	9	1.00	3.00	1.7778
Financial advice, benefits and support.	11	1.00	3.00	2.0000
Adult education and evening classes.	7	1.00	3.00	2.1429
Spiritual/faith needs.	6	1.00	3.00	2.1667
Housing.	7	1.00	3.00	2.4286

The mean scores in relation to satisfaction with the approach of the day services to working with service users are shown in table 3. Respondents were asked to rate their agreement with each statement on a 5-point scale (1=Strongly Agree, 2=Agree, 3=Neither, 4 Disagree, 5= Strongly Disagree) so the lower scores are again the more positive.

As the table illustrates, all the scores fell within the positive range (lower than 2.5) indicating a strong belief that the services valued respondents' contributions and were sensitive to their needs. The areas that scored lowest (though still tending towards 'agree') were in relation to sensitivity to religious, cultural and ethnic backgrounds and needs.

The service users were then asked about how they felt the transition process from 'old' to 'new' day services was managed (table 4). Only four of the seventeen service users thought the process was managed well with most responding 'don't know'.

Table 3
Mean scores: satisfaction with approach to working with service users

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean
I feel the team/workers have valued my contributions in planning my care.	14	1.00	5.00	1.5714
The service has been sensitive to my mental health needs.	14		5.00	1.6429
I feel that my involvement in discussions about my care has had an impact on the care I receive.	16	1.00	5.00	1.6875
I feel I have been listened to by the staff working in the service.	14	1.00	5.00	1.7143
The staff have made me feel more positive about my future recovery.	14	1.00	5.00	2.0000
The staff and I jointly agreed my plan of care/activities.	13	1.00	5.00	2.0000
I have found the day service/bridge builder service sufficiently challenging and stimulating.	14	1.00	5.00	2.2857
The service has been sensitive to my ethnic background.	13	1.00	4.00	2.6154
The service has been sensitive to my cultural background.	13	1.00	4.00	2.6154
The service has been sensitive to my religious needs.	13	1.00	4.00	2.6154

Table 4
Overall, how well do you think the change over from the 'old' to the 'new' services was managed?

		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Very well	1	8.3
	Well	3	25.0
	Don't know	8	66.7
	Total	12	100.0
Did not answer		5	
Total		17	

As table 5 shows, few of the service users expressed a clear opinion about how well particular aspects of the change process were managed. Overall, these respondents did not feel involved in the transition process, although they were not clearly actively opposed to the idea of new style day services.

Table 5 Current day service users' views on the transition process						
	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know	No opinion
I was informed of the changes well in advance of the actual transition	0	3	3	1	3	2
I found the changes unsettling and distressing	1	1	2	0	4	3
I had an opportunity to give my views to the service commissioners	0	1	3	1	3	3
The changes were long overdue and what I would have wanted	1	1	2	0	5	3
I felt involved in the transition process	0	0	3	2	4	3
I felt my views and opinions were valued by the commissioners	0	2	1	2	4	3
I felt I had no power to influence the way the changes took place	3	2	3	0	3	3

Six respondents used the opportunity provided on the final page of the questionnaire to add further comments. Most comments reflected positive experiences, although one person expressed a wish to be more involved and another highlighted a need for out of hours support:

I would like to be more involved, preferably on a day to day basis, helping others achieve their respective goals and ambitions in life.

I would appreciate some out-of-hours support, even when not in Crisis.

It has given me my life back. Without Pathway 2 I don't know where I would be now. I was blessed to have met (staff names); they were always helpful, kind and never judged me, they helped me to help myself and because they believed in me I now believe in myself. Pathway2 saved my life.

Progress is being made in all aspects of my life with support from bridge building services.

In my particular case, I feel the services provided could not have been better. My support team were very understanding of my situation, and it showed in the personal care plan that was written for me, and which we adhered to. My confidence has grown to a point where I feel strong enough to continue to help myself. Without the support of my care team, this may never have happened. The funding provided by this service which allows me to attend the gym and local swimming pool, is already having a huge impact on my fitness and general well-being. With physical fitness comes mental stability. I have this service to thank for that. Thank you.

At the moment they are very good.

Users of day services prior to the transition

The three informants who identified themselves as users of day services prior to the changeover, but were not using day services now were from the East of the area, two from Colchester and one from Dovercourt. Again, not everyone responded to all the questions and where applicable this is reflected in the tables that follow.

Table 6 shows that respondents largely perceived the services they had used as useful and helpful, particularly in supporting self-help group membership and activity.

Table 6 Day service use outcomes				
	A great help	A little help	It has not helped	Not applicable
Participating in local community groups and activities	2	0	0	0
Participating in art and cultural activities	2	0	0	0
Developing a circle of friends and social contacts	2	0	0	0
Adult education and evening classes	0	1	0	1
Volunteer work	1	0	0	1
Self help group membership and support	3	0	0	0
Financial advice, benefits and support	1	0	0	1
Social and leisure activities	1	1	0	0
Spiritual/faith needs	0	1	0	1
Housing	0	0	0	2

When asked why they no longer used day services, one respondent ticked the option 'transport difficulties' and one ticked 'because they don't meet my individual needs'. One commented:

I am one of the group of service users who are too well to be an inpatient, but too unwell to use any of the current day services.

Two of the three respondents did not think the change over from the old to new services was well managed and one ticked 'don't know'. Their responses to the detailed questions about the transition are shown in table 7.

Table 7 Former day service users' views on the transition process					
	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
I was informed of the changes well in advance of the actual transition	0	0	0	1	0
I found the changes unsettling and distressing	2	1	0	0	0
I had an opportunity to give my views to the service commissioners	0	0	3	0	0
The changes were long overdue and what I would have wanted	0	1	0	1	0
I felt involved in the transition process	0	0	0	2	0
I felt my views and opinions were valued by the commissioners	0	0	0	2	0
I felt I had no power to influence the way the changes took place	0	1	0	2	0

One respondent commented:

Even when the old day services closed the new services were not ready to start. The existing list of members was not passed on to the new service. Nobody involved service users in the decision and the commissioners had no idea of all that was offered by the old service. Old day services were for all clients, new services only available for a small minority. 400 in old service 75 in new service.

Two respondents added the following final comments:

I have been fighting to get proper services for 2ndry care clients for years but since 2009 I have lost four friends due to death, seen a large group become hermits and have no quality of life. Crisis services are becoming jammed up because these people have no support. I know of one case just out of hospital, no consultant, no care co-ordinator, no CPN, no Support worker, told three month waiting list for any of them. The Day Services gave a lot more than a cup of coffee, it was a community, for some their family. There was qualified staff there who could pick up when someone was becoming unwell, they could sort out queries before they became problems, they were a shoulder to cry on and many other things. Also meeting up with mates in the same boat and playing scrabble or bingo was worth 2 diazepam. Stigma still exists and many have tried to go into the community but have found it difficult, and some who have managed it say they still want access to a social group who suffer the same as them.

It has been difficult to adjust.

Those who had used but no longer used current day services

Two service users from this group responded to the survey. One had used the current services for three months and one for six months. One informant came from Clacton, the other did not complete that part of the questionnaire.

Both respondents indicated that they had been 'very satisfied' with their day services and they were also very positive in responses to questions about the way in which the services had worked with them.

Only one person completed the questions about how the service had helped them, indicating that the service had helped in seven of the ten outcome areas.

Only one also answered the questions about the transition to the new services, to the effect that they had 'no opinion' in relation to the questions.

No reasons were given by either of the informants for why they had stopped using the day service but one did provide some positive final comments:

I found Pathway 2 a great experience. With the support of my Bridge Builder I feel I have been able to start living my life again and begin to enjoy it. My Bridge Builder (staff name) was very approachable, helpful and encouraging. I would recommend this service to my friends.

Those who had not used day services

Eight respondents indicated that they had not used day services. Although this question was intended for potential users of day services, two informants were staff and they provided some comments:

I am a homeless officer and Pathway2 helped with a mutual client. Loads of support for a young lad with learning difficulties who was made homeless and successfully helped by adult social services after (day service worker) made a referral. I feel he may have slipped through the net if (name) hadn't gone beyond her brief and looked at all aspects of his life to make sure he got all the help he needed. Brilliant service.

I do not use the service myself but as an occupational therapist working in mental health I have referred a lot of my clients to the Pathway 2 service with good effect. The Pathway 2 service has been so useful for the clients I have referred. There is currently little non-statutory support for individuals suffering with mental health problems and so the pathway 2 service has supported them to access community resources that they may not have been able to do alone. I personally feel that many of the individuals I have worked with would be in the crisis mental health service more often without the support of pathway 2. A very valued service.

Another respondent represented a support group and wrote:

I think it would help if they were advertised better; more relevant for people with bipolar disorder and/or are a real choice for people with bipolar. eg art classes are a waste of time for people with bipolar other than a social class/ relaxation whereas bipolar self-management courses/ mood checks etc. would be more appropriate. One-to-one Cognitive Behavioural Therapy specific for bipolar disorder would be the best option for someone with bipolar yet there is not this option in Chelmsford and the CBT offered has a waiting list of over two years...I am still waiting. I would prefer more money spent in these real alternatives than put into activities which have no proven worth in the treatment of bipolar plus it would save money in the long run by people with bipolar not returning to hospital as an inpatient. In summary we at Bipolar UK - Chelmsford want money spent on: 1. Individual CBT specific for bipolar disorder 2. Bipolar self-management courses plus follow up involving mood checking/techniques/tools for enhanced intervention and relapse prevention.

Two of the remaining respondents were from Chelmsford, one from Dovercourt, one from Harlow and one from Braintree.

When asked why they did not use day services, six said it was 'because I am not aware of what the service can offer me' and two said it was 'because they don't meet my particular needs'. One commented:

I occasionally use Trust community therapy services.

When asked what would make it more likely they would use services, three made comments:

If I had any info !!!!! No one has told or advised me of these.

More information about services, I am not interested in seeking employment or voluntary work.

I am now unemployed due to my health difficulties and I am finding it hard to find services in Braintree.

When asked if they would like to make any final comments about day services one person responded:

There is a lack of awareness about recovery being a continuum and sometimes people don't feel well enough to be 'moved on' or may seek the security of a permanent meeting place just for something like a cup of coffee and a chat.

Carers

Of the three carers who completed the questionnaire two were from Clacton and one from Colchester. The two Clacton carers indicated that the person they cared for used the bridge builder service and both were 'very satisfied' with the service. The Colchester carer did not know what type of service cared for person was using but was 'very dissatisfied' with the service and commented:

From having day services several times a week now 4 hours a week. No support for client or carer. No safe place for client. No free time for carer. Has had to have first time admission to hospital because no support when he started to feel unwell, so became so ill he had to go into hospital. Many clients have difficulty with changes, but we feel he was dumped and no help was available.

When asked if they would like to make any final comments about day services, one carer commented:

I go to carers meetings and all that is discussed now is how to manage your person at home. No thought was put into this except how much money could be saved. There are no day services for a large number of clients, which leads to people becoming very unwell, and we have lost three friends who I am sure would still be here if the services had not changed.

Summary and conclusions

Respondents who were currently receiving a service were very positive about their services, with some perceiving the help and approach as 'life changing'. Alongside these positive views, some of those who used the 'old style' services were concerned about the loss of valued social support and self-help together with perceived reductions in levels of service, which was thought to have caused considerable distress for some people.

The survey results should not be regarded as representative of the target populations but should be read and interpreted together with the findings of the face-to-face consultations. The current services are clearly working very well for some people but others may be 'falling through the net'. It was heartening that the survey reached some people who had not used day services before and the chief obstacle to using them appeared to be lack of information and knowledge about what the services could offer.